

439 Valley Drive NW
Floyd, VA 24091

March 25, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration 6719 '99 MAR 30 A10:23
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to comment on **Docket #98N-1038, "Irradiation in the production, processing and handling of food."** As a crop scientist, gardener and US citizen, I feel it is vitally important that all food which has been irradiated, or which contains one or more irradiated ingredients, be clearly and prominently labeled to indicate that it has been thus treated. The label should carry the radura symbol and the phrase "treated with radiation" or "irradiated." Euphemisms such as "cold pasteurized" or "electronically pasteurized" are misleading and inadequate, and should not be used.

Packaged irradiated foods should bear the radura and informative label on the front of the package. Produce and other whole, nonpackaged foods that have been irradiated, should be required to have a sign or placard bearing the radura and informative statement attached to the rack or shelf on which the food is displayed.

It is known that irradiation of food can destroy some vitamins and other nutrients, and that it can change the taste, texture or storage properties of foods in ways that are not obvious and are not expected by the consumer. It also causes chemical changes in food, of which the long term human health effects are as yet unknown. Thus I feel that citizens have a right to choose whether or not to purchase or eat food that has been treated with radiation. This can be guaranteed only by a requirement for clear and unequivocal labeling of all irradiated foods.

In its initial decision to allow irradiation as a method of food processing, the FDA recognized irradiation as a "material fact about the processing of a food," which should be disclosed. This is still true; thus the FDA has a duty to continue to enforce labeling requirements for all irradiated foods.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

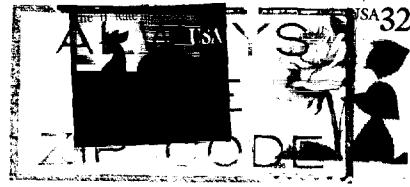
Yours sincerely,
Mark Schonbeck
Mark Schonbeck

cc: Senator John Warner
Senator Chuck Robb
Representative Rick Boucher

98N-1038

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Mark Schonbeck
439 Valley Dr NW
Floyd VA 24091



DOCKETS MANAGEMENT BRANCH
(HFA-305)
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
5630 FISHERS LANE, ROOM 1061
ROCKVILLE, MD 20852

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